

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# All THE YEAR ROUND

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## PHŒBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

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MRS. TILLOTSON," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXXV. THE HUMOURS OF HOMBURG.

In no spot do the pleasant days seem to canter by so jocundly, as in the agreeable playground known as Homburg. It seems a general holiday for all—the elderly, the ill-humoured, the cantankerous, all assuming good spirits, and even a theatrical jollity; for everyone has that relation to home and its cares such as the old debtor enjoyed, when Sunday intervened to shelter him from the law's process. The work-a-day world, as it were, had stopped short, and would only begin to revolve when the season for return arrived. Perhaps an exception was to be made in the case of Pratt-Hawkins, with whom it was a season of even extra toil; for the opportunities were too precious to be foregone. The place was a sort of pot-au-feu of dukes and lords, who at this time were peculiarly accessible; and he could not afford to throw away the chances. Accordingly, at early morn, down at the Springs he contrived to have his "turn or two" with the lord or lady, tumbler in hand; or, at noon, he would have the happiness of giving his Times to some political peer, thus doing him a welcome service. Pratt-Hawkins, though of small means, subscribed to the leading journal; not for his own private reading, but for the special purpose of lending it to persons of distinction. Later, he sat to hear the music; and there was nothing to prevent his fixing his chair within fair skirmishing range. Dinners were devoted to the ladies, the

agreeable Pratt-Hawkins generally being asked to sit beside some family of good degree. But choicest of all was it, when the old London soldier—who acted for the royal duke, and had to exert his wits to give a variety to each day's performance—cast his eyes on Pratt-Hawkins and asked him to make one at the "Dook's" table. On that night he enjoyed the sweetest sleep he had known for years.

To the Pringles he was friendly and accommodating, on this one general principle, that they did not interfere with the really important ends of his life. Miss Lacroix, who was seen often sitting with the family—and they had all taken a prodigious fancy to her from different motives—he affected to overlook, and was scarcely courteous to her, having in his old heart no such useless elements as sympathy, love, or good-nature—things which were not to be discounted, or which, at least, he did not know how to discount, in the world of rank and titles. Perhaps, too, he had never forgiven a little speech which she made at his expense on a public occasion. It was, indeed, a comedy to watch the unblushing way in which this gentleman followed his profession. He was always seen resplendent in his white waistcoat and crimson tie, and elegantly sinuous "Lincoln and Bennett," which glistened, snake-like; for Pratt-Hawkins always dressed as though for afternoon Pall-mall.

The little incident which might be said to have caused Miss Lacroix's début at Homburg was the following. Pratt-Hawkins was sitting with the Pringles and Lady Cecilia Shortlands, and was fluently describing some dinner-party at which he had assisted, drawing streams of titles

from his mouth, much as a conjurer appears to draw endless yards of ribbon. In the middle of a sentence, intended as an answer to questions put by one of the ladies, he started suddenly from his chair, nearly oversetting the little table, and brushed past one of the ladies, who was in his way, and whose dress he all but tore in his eagerness. He was presently seen standing talking to a marquis, who had been observed to beckon to him. The marquis, it appeared, only wanted "to see the Times," some one having said to him, "Oh, there's Pratt-Hawkins, always carries one, like his pocket-handkerchief." It was when he returned slowly to his place, smiling to himself in a fit of complacent abstraction—the Pringles being inclined reverentially to wait his awakened attention—that Miss Lacroix said, quietly:

"Mr. Pratt-Hawkins, you are like the cat in the fairy tale."

The ponies tittered at this odd speech, while the person to whom it was addressed looked at her with astonishment.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"I mean the cat that was changed into a lady, and behaved decorously during dinner, until a mouse happened to appear, when she flew from her seat, nearly dragging everything off the table."

"I don't follow," said he.

"You will forgive us for wishing that you did—not—at least, so impetuously; our dresses have suffered seriously—"

"Oh, very smart! uncommon smart!" said he. "You are quite witty."

"And, after all, you don't seem to have caught your mouse as the lady did," went on Miss Lacroix.

This was considered a capital lesson for Pratt-Hawkins, was told that day at the "Dook's" dinner; and that illustrious person had the young lady pointed out to him—there were always attendant jackals to do these things at the Springs. It is easy to become a celebrity, or, rather, a notability at a place of this kind, there being always a dead level of travelling mediocrity. Hence it became at once understood that the young lady had wit and satire; and those articles might be expected from her on proper provocation. And thus people began to ask about Miss Lacroix, and to say she was so clever; but Pratt-Hawkins, who had something of the malice of the ape in him, never forgave her, and kept asking, insidiously, Who was she? Where did she come from? and was

determined to do her an ill turn, in his own small way, if he could. There was a calm coldness in the young face which might have warned him of the danger. He might have gathered the information he required from Miss Lacroix herself, who was ready to give the fullest account of her history, and, in fact, told how she had been taken abroad by a maiden lady, who had taken a fancy to her, but who had died rather suddenly at Aix-les-Bains. The Minerers were in the same hotel, they had been kind to her, perhaps found her useful, and had asked her "to stay with them." This was the phrase always used by Miss Lacroix, to prevent any misconception. She was independent to a certain degree, her friend having left her a trifle, the rest going, in Swift's words, "to endow a college or a cat." The question, however, that interested most people was not the past, but the future; and a little mild speculation was sometimes set on foot, as to what was to become of the young lady, when her visit to the Minerers should terminate. Her parents were dead; she had, indeed, a clergyman, or a clergyman's wife, for a relation; but they were poor struggling people, encumbered with children, unencumbered with resources; or, as one of the watering-place wits would put it, un-incomeed altogether. Miss Lacroix, however, seemed quite tranquil as to the future, and seemed to convey that events might be trusted to provide for her.

Among her fastest friends was Sam Pringle, who exhibited for her something that amounted to a "tendreesse," and which did not in the least disturb his lady's peace of mind. Indeed, anything of a softening kind, or that would, in plain language, "keep him quiet," was really welcomed by his family. Observers were not a little amused at the symptoms of the change thus produced in him. He might be said, literally, to "dance attendance" on her, for he performed a succession of his most favourite antics about her, and at the balls which were given at the Cure House, he amazed the French and German gentlemen with his movements, which, like a late Premier's description of English prosperity, was marked by "leaps and bounds." Under this treatment Miss Lacroix was always good-humoured, and tolerated him. "I am her slave, you know," he would say; "her mameluke," or mammy-look, as he pronounced it; and he glared defiantly at any young fellow

who ventured to interfere with his pretensions.

Apropos of young gentlemen, there now appeared on the scene a young fellow who had come to join his parents for a long holiday. This was the son and heir of Sir John and Lady Minerer, Mr. Horace. He was a fair, natural, off-hand fellow, always in roars of laughter at some joke of his own, and ready for "fun" of any kind. People liked him on account of this perpetual cheerfulness which he diffused about. He had got leave from his ship, being a lieutenant in the navy, and had come to see his relatives and enjoy himself. Nobody, nothing could resist him; and he had that "royal" way with him, both of spending money, as well as of greeting and treating friends and acquaintances, which is so attractive to strangers, but which to those who have to furnish the cost is often inconvenient.

He was, of course, at once absorbed into the shifting, glittering coterie of the place, and in a day or two was quite at home among them all, enjoying himself thoroughly, and every day starting something new, which caused people to talk, and also laugh. Who does not envy this curious gift of thus being liked, impassively, as it were, without care or exertion, and of filling the public mind, while others sacrifice time and enormous labour to get any particular act, or even themselves, in any shape recognised?

The place by this time was full of the usual typical characters. There was that strange Lady Castlefirt, who was there sans husband, and, indeed, as some said, sans restraint of any kind, and whom the more charitable would have set down as eccentric, had she not been a countess. This personage was always surrounded by those curious beings whose position is undefined, and who have a certain fascination, perhaps, for the first week of acquaintance, but no longer; men and women that sing, have been taught abroad, prefer to speak Italian, and stand with one foot in the professional, the other in the amateur country. Sometimes they have actually been on the operatic stage, in some foreign land, and give out that they are to be enlisted by the English impressario of Her Majesty's Theatre. Her ladyship was always attended by one or two of these pseudo clever persons, and it need hardly be said that Pratt-Hawkins asserted a place in the favoured band. She had a daughter, Lady Victoria Tufton, for whose

sister, by the aid of tulle, white veils, and gossamer hats, she strove to pass; and there were choice little dinners or expeditions, organised by Giulio Egerton—such was the name of the existing amateur professional, or professional amateur—at a quiet hotel, to which only the select were admitted. Pratt-Hawkins, a couple of lively girls, young Minerer, with a colonel or captain of harmonious "fastness," together with a lively bachelor judge, generally made the party.

With a sort of infatuation, of course, our friends the Pringles must be eager to get within this charmed circle. They worried Pratt-Hawkins to secure an introduction to the aesthetic countess, with whom they were about as likely to mingle as water is with oil. When this blessing was secured, they did not know how to turn it to account, or what to do with it; for, after the first simperings and timorous approaches which attended the ceremony, the intercourse, as it were, hung fire; their eagerness naturally leading the introducer to suppose that there was some object in view, or some communication to be made. Lady Castlefirt was, however, a person to whom the words of promise, "We hope, on your return to London, to see you at our house," were not inviting; and then something was murmured of "Dine with us—meet the Baddeleys—"

"An inducement, indeed!" replied the fast countess, with a loud laugh and toss of her head. "Were they not shamefully treated by people in the country, that came in for some money? Serve them right, too. No, I thank you; pray don't go to the trouble of inviting them for me."

The family looked helplessly one at the other; the fast countess waited for the expected communication, but in vain, then turned away impatiently.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI. MISS LACROIX'S FIRST SKIRMISH.

At one of the countess's dinners, Horace Minerer had announced that the cleverest girl in the place was living with his mother, and retailed, in presence of the gentleman who had so suffered, the pleasant "hit" she had given to Pratt-Hawkins. The fast countess immediately determined to know Miss Lacroix, and absorb her into her set, and, indeed, had been rather taken with her appearance. The acquaintance was made at once. Lady Castlefirt "took her up" with violence, and insisted on enrolling her in her retinue; at least, whenever she

saw her seated on the terrace, would have her chair brought up beside her. The fact was, she was *so* clever, and the countess adored cleverness.

It was curious to see how Miss Lacroix behaved under this popularity. She was not in the least moved from her habitual calm. She accepted but did not seek. Lady Minerer, a person of ill-controlled passions, and who got into furies with her footmen and maids—such as, if exhibited in any public place by persons of lower degree, would entail the interference of the police—was, it was evident, with difficulty restraining herself. Whether she was held in awe or fear of the cold gaze of this young lady, or whether the latter had some secret power, it was hard to say. It was certain that Miss Lacroix joined her new friends with impunity, and came and went as it suited her. She had at the same time an extraordinary offensive and defensive ally in young Minerer, who showed his admiration in many ways.

What was this charm, if it might so be called, in Miss Lacroix? It was not that "sweetness of manner" which opens to some the iron gates of exclusive society; nor was it any remarkable cleverness of observation, or depth of knowledge. It was a certain air of power, akin to that by which a man raises himself to be a minister—an air which showed that she could do what she chose to have done.

It had been noticed how effectually Miss Lacroix had quelled any attempt at rioting on the part of her patroness. Those chilling eyes of hers were invaluable; and, indeed, it was worth while seeing her at the junkettings described, and with which she would be scarcely thought to harmonise. Under their glance Mr. Pratt-Hawkins felt most uncomfortable; and not a little of the entertainment of the party was in seeing him "roasted" by the lady. Sometimes these little expeditions were to a small inn half-a-dozen miles away, which, someone had discovered, had the art of preparing a particular dish in a particular way; and this, and the comparative rudeness of the surroundings, made the attraction.

During the course of these incidents, it began to be noted that the young sailor was not in such good spirits as before, or that he had grown silent and seemed preoccupied by his own thoughts. There was a term to his jests and boisterous practical joking, and very soon the plain-speaking persons of the coterie had discovered the reason. He was in love with the curious

young lady who was insensibly becoming the centre of attraction in the place. There had been a sort of friendly confidence established between the pair from the beginning, and, indeed, they had met before. The young fellow's ship had been off one of the French ports for some weeks, when Miss Lacroix and her patroness were staying there. From some stray allusions which Lady Minerer had let fall when she was irritated, it came out that young Mr. Minerer had suddenly come to Homburg against his parents' wishes; and, putting these various matters together, it was easy to see that the situation would soon be considerably "strained." Lady Minerer—one of those persons who take "the man in the street" into their confidence, or, in preference, the woman—began now to discharge, on her new friends and lodgers the Pringles, her opinions of Miss Lacroix; and these, too, couched in terms of extraordinary vigour and even abuse. On one occasion the family were seated round her, listening with that devout and obsequious veneration which was now becoming habitual to them.

"I could tell you things about her that would astonish you. She's an artful, designing person. Who is she, I should like to know? Where does she come from? Has she ever given an account of herself? People that drop from the clouds in this way are always suspicious characters."

Then, conscious that her own intimacy with a person of such doubtful character required explanation, she continued:

"As for us, she imposed on us; made herself useful when I was ill; and got that foolish Sir John to ask her to stay with us for six months. Now she affects to say that this arrangement was of our making, and that she holds us to it. Did you ever hear of such a thing! She's no lady. And, by-the-way, I must caution you. I don't like to see the way you and your foolish husband are taking her up. Better give it up; it's not proper, you know."

Now this diatribe was delivered in Lady Minerer's accustomed style—viz., in loud, unmeasured tones, as if from her stall in the market-place, not caring, as she often repeated, who heard her. In her room, however, were those thin folding-doors usual in foreign apartments, which seem rather screens than doors. She certainly would have cared that the person who now opened this slight partition, and entered, had not overheard her. Miss Lacroix entered calmly, greeted the Pringles warmly, and sat down.

"Why, why," said the confounded Lady Minerer, pausing in her knitting, of which she did an enormous amount in the year, useful to no member of the human family, "you said you had gone out with those people."

"I have returned, and have been in there for the last ten minutes."

"Oh, I see. Listening! Come, that's ladylike."

"I should not have alluded to it. But I am glad that it is you that have mentioned it. Let me appeal to your justice and candour, and ask you—have you been telling the truth about me to these ladies?"

Lady Minerer flung her worsted balls, needles, &c., into a great basket at her feet, much as a waggoner would strip off his jacket for "a round or two," and got ready for the fray.

"What do you mean by such impertinent questions?"

"I merely ask—is the account that you have just given of me a correct one; is it not rather a very unjust, unfair, and cruel one? Have you not suppressed something?"

"Oh, I can't listen to this—in my own rooms. Go away. Go away, at once."

"Why did you not tell them the real reason of my coming on a visit to you? That your son had offered secretly to marry me; that I had declined, and communicated the matter to you; and that, out of gratitude, and seeing that I was alone and friendless, my only friend having just died, you had insisted on my coming to stay with you? Is not this true?"

"Oh yes! You took care to make a good bargain for yourself."

"You see, Mrs. Pringle, she admits that I have told the truth."

"Yes; but who brought him here again? And are not you now beginning your tricks—trying to entangle the poor boy, for he is only a boy?"

"Nothing of the kind. You can see by his changed manner that I am, as they say in the novels, pitiless."

"Yes, novels; exactly. You know plenty about them. That's your line; you are busy writing one, I suppose."

"That does not affect the matter in hand. If I were as artful as you say, I might show you, before twelve hours were over, something substantial to support your insinuations."

Here Lady Minerer turned pale and trembled with rage.

"And," went on Miss Lacroix, "since I am exposed to these unjust and most ungenerous attacks, after behaving in the most honourable way, I do not see why I should not resume my independence. It will put us on a straightforward footing. Why should I, out of compliment, be protecting your son for you? Many persons in my position—I am a lady born—would have no scruple in accepting what was thus fortunately thrown in their way. I considered that your hospitality was a fitting acknowledgment of my having acted generously. What if I were now to let matters take their course, and give over a forbearance which many a fashionable lady with daughters to provide for might think Quixotic? You don't quite like that idea, and very naturally."

This little scene at once revealed the curious relations that existed between the Minerers and their guest. The logic of the situation and the threat used was quite intelligible to all present; and it was plain that Lady Minerer, like all violent persons who have driven matters to extremity, would be herself driven back to extremity instead of the matters in question.

The Pringles listened with their usual simpering wonder, agreeing and sympathising according as they were required to do. On the next day, to their astonishment, Lady Minerer appeared in the walk as usual, with Miss Lacroix in her retinue.

#### THE POETICAL SIDE OF JAPANESE LIFE.

ROMANCE, it is universally acknowledged, is gradually being edged out of the world by the march of modern civilisation, and the practical tendencies of this iron age. It may be found scattered here and there amongst the vine-clad hills of Southern France, hidden in the mountain fastnesses of the Tyrol, or in Italian towns as yet unexplored by the modern tourist. Occasionally it is met with in comparatively unknown Spain; and amongst the peoples of pure Scandinavian origin it undoubtedly exists in a crude and rugged form. The Indians of North America, the Hindoos, and the Chinese, cling to its remnants with a certain degree of fondness; but nowhere has it been so little changed by the hand of time as in the distant, sunny islands of Japan; and here, even, we must enjoy it whilst we may, for reform and progress are cutting it away piecemeal, and Japan

must sooner or later take her place amongst the common-place, practical nations of the world.

Between the inhabitants of Southern Europe—the most romantic people of our Western world—and the Japanese, there is great similarity of character. Both are essentially people who live for the present; both prefer the bright side of the mirror of life to the duller but truer; both are epicurean in their tastes, habits, and customs; to both is luxury delightful, and exertion detestable. Without being slothful, as the Italians, the Japanese are remarkably wanting in that cold, stern energy so characteristic of Northern nations; without being violently excitable, as the Spaniards, they are easily moved to mirth and tears, and extremely sensitive to ridicule and shame; and, without carrying their patriotism to the frantic extreme of the Marseillais and Bordelais, they have a profound veneration for their native land, and everything pertaining to it; and, with the Chinese, share the singularity of being one of the last nations of the globe to throw off an old civilisation for a new.

Again, they have the chivalrous politeness and courtesy of the French of a past generation, the warm feelings of the Spaniards, and the adoration for nature and art of the Italians. Hence the English traveller in Japan cannot fail to remark that, whilst the inhabitants have an intense awe and respect for us, their personal feelings bind them far closer to the nations which resemble them most in manners and customs.

One must not look for the poetry and romance of Japan in the treaty ports, or in the towns accessible to foreign influences. Yedo, or, as it is called, Tokio, though never a beautiful city, was once the centre of all that gave character to the inhabitants of the land. Every scholar, poet, or artist of note spent, at least, some portion of his life there. In Yedo the national legends and traditions were held in the highest esteem; and, above all, it was the hotbed of disaffection towards foreign civilisation and reform. Now that it has been thrown open to foreigners, it has become the dullest, most commonplace town imaginable. Artillery—during the civil war of 1868, which dethroned the Shogun, and placed the Mikado in power—destroyed much that was historical and legendary; but the present mania for reconstructing the city on the European

model has swept away still more. Nothing is now safe from the engineer and contractor. If a new street is to be built, down come old temples, hallowed by the memories of ages; groves of trees are converted into planking and firewood; quaint old palaces of once noble princes are levelled with the ground; heroes are tumbled from their tombs; and a white, rigid line of flimsily-stuccoed houses, in imitation of the foreign style, takes their place. Undeniably, in some cases, these innovations may be improvements; but, to the romantic eye, they are sad triumphs of Vandalism.

With the character of their town the character of the Yedo people has changed. Civility and courtesy are to be universally met with in the country; but in Yedo, now that every other man has his hair cropped in the foreign style, wears European clothes, travels by railway, and smokes cigars, insolence and independence are painfully prevalent. Having leaped over five hundred years in as many days, the Yedo citizen of to-day considers himself, not only equal to his foreign model, but immeasurably superior. In the public offices this is especially to be noticed. Anyone who has had any dealings with the foreign-office clerks or custom-house employés in Yedo will recognise the truth of this statement.

Away from Yedo and the treaty ports all is changed. From the world of new-fangled ideas, apish imitation, and conceit, one emerges into a beautiful, and as yet unsullied sphere of poetry and romance.

Enthusiastic in their reverence for the mythology, songs, and legends of their forefathers, the simple rustics still plod in their harmless groove of life. Into hundreds of little towns and villages, away from the great highways, foreign innovations have failed yet to penetrate; old customs and habits still obtain, and the poetry of the old world life of Japan still exists, although the circle of the new life is spreading wider and wider, and bids fair, in very few years, totally to supplant its rival.

The mythology of a country is a very fair criterion of the character of its inhabitants. Belonging, as it does, to a nation eminently skilful in the art of war, the Japanese mythology is throughout redolent of violence and bloodshed; but an under-stratum of softer and more beautiful stories exists, unsurpassed even by the fables of ancient Greece. The sun,

the moon, the stars, all have their poems; every one of the several hundred gods has his legend; every beautiful and historical spot its tale. Prominent amongst these are the stories of the creation of Japan; of the loves of Izanagi and Izanami, the Adam and Eve of the popular belief; of the formation of the island of Inoshima, so well known to Yokohama tourists; of the deeds of the Kami, or first rulers of the land; of the old court life at Kioto and Kamakoura; of Taico-Sama; of the loves of the Prince of Sendai; and the ballad of Takasago. Every Japanese child learns to lisp these and a hundred other fanciful tales on its mother's knee, as every English child learns the stories of Jack the Giant-Killer and Cinderella. Many of these stories bear striking resemblance to the old Greek legends; in others we are reminded of the Scandinavian folklore, and the deeds of our own King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. But in telling our tales we have nothing approaching belief. The Japanese places as strict a faith in the authenticity of his, as does a Catholic in the virtues of a bit of the true cross or the blood of St. Januarius. To inform a Japanese of the old school that the beautiful island of Inoshima was formed in the ordinary course of nature, and not from drops of water fallen from the sword of a god, would be to insult his creed and his prejudices. The birth-places and graves of mythical heroes and heroines are still revered by the country folk; even in iconoclastic Yedo, the burial-places of the forty-seven Rônins, and of Kompachi and Komurasaki—personages of comparatively recent celebrity—are carefully kept in order by priests, are annually the scenes of great commemorative festivals, and are daily the resort of many pilgrims.

The country is dotted with shrines and spots celebrated in the historical and legendary annals of the country. At Kamakoura, fifteen miles from Yokohama,—better known to foreigners from the proximity of the colossal bronze statue of Buddha, than from any historical associations—is the scene of action of half the romantic and heroic histories of the country. Huge temples, broad avenues, vast flights of steps, and stately groves of trees, still mark the site of the ancient capital of Japan, are still reliques of the days when heroism and chivalry went hand in hand, and when Dai-Nippon, "Peerless Japan," as her sons still love to call her, was alone

in her majesty, and unknown to the world of "outer barbarians." North of Yedo lies Nikko, the lovely burial-place of Iye Yas, founder of the Tokugawa line of Shoguns—a veritable "piece of heaven dropped on earth," a cluster of fairy temples set in a framework of some of the finest woodland scenery of the country. Away north again are the famous shrines of Isé, to which every Japanese who can do so makes a pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime. But all the pride and reverence of the Japanese is centred in the great mountain Fuji-Yama. The glory of the regular, pure-white cone, rising from the plain, and towering king-like over the petty hills scattered to the right and left, has been sung by Japanese poets, and limned by Japanese artists, from time immemorial. Well-omened is the house so situated as to command a view of the mountain; fortunate the man who can show, amongst his household treasures, the duly-signed certificate of his having made its arduous ascent. Scarcely a screen, or a tray, or a lacquered bowl exists, on which the well-known shape of the mountain is not portrayed. Ignorant rustics cannot be convinced that there are spots in the world from whence the cone cannot be described. To the citizen of Yedo it is a barometer, a protective genius, a sight to amaze the foreign visitor; to the peasant it is a something so sublime and grand as not to be spoken of without reverence.

Next in importance to Fuji, as a fountain of poetic fable, are the sky and the heavenly bodies. The moon, with the Japanese, is a god; the sun, a goddess; the stars are the spirits of the great and mighty of old days. In Japanese works of art, and in the fanciful literature, Fuji-Yama and the moon are generally, so to speak, in conjunction, the sun apparently playing a far less important part; a strange fact, when we remember that one of the most elaborate epithets bestowed on their country by the Japanese, is the "Land of the Rising Sun." About the moon-god and the stars, there are innumerable pretty stories and ballads; temples to the former are common, and are generally in solitary neighbourhoods, and always on the summits of hills. Strange to say, with all their keen appreciation of the charms and wonders of nature, the Japanese have never invested the ocean with any of the attributes so common amongst the poets of Western nations. Although it is the chief source of their

daily food, there is very little evidence to show that they regard it with any poetic fervour or love. To them it is rather an object of dread and awe, a fearful unknown power sleeping under the guise of silvery stillness, to be awakened occasionally into frantic fits of destruction and harm-doing. Hence, with their vivid imagination and power of fanciful creation, it may be easily understood that the Japanese are a people keenly susceptible to superstitious influences. The rise and fall of the tides, the aspect of Fuji, the clearness or obscurity of the heavens on certain days and certain hours, are carefully watched as omens of coming good or evil. The bull worship of the Egyptians finds its parallel in the fox worship of the Japanese; dogs are protected from harm by public edict in Yedo as in Constantinople; to kill a stork is as great a crime in the eyes of a Japanese as to kill an albatross in the eyes of an English sailor. Night has peculiar horrors for the country people. Then, it is supposed, the restless spirits of those who have led wicked lives perform their penance by wandering abroad on the earth; the "pixies" of Devonshire, and the "brownies" of Scotland, are represented in Japan by elves and sprites, who do good offices for worthy households, and commit all kinds of vagaries on the premises of loose-livers and evil-doers. The sound of a cock crowing at night is held to be a sure presage of coming pestilence or fire; a lantern blown out portends, not irrationally, a violent storm; travelling after sunset is carefully avoided, not only for fear of dangers of the road, but in the dread of intruding on the sphere of the spirits; long circuits are made by travellers to avoid haunted spots or places of evil repute, such as execution-grounds or scenes of past murder and bloodshed. Clerical influence has much to do with this. A superstitious people is generally priest-ridden, and Japan is no exception to the rule. Till the late reforms in the spiritual government of the country were effected, the priests had—under the great lords—absolute power of life and death over the masses of the people. The state of the country resembled very much that of our own, before the suppression of the monasteries in the reign of Henry the Eighth. Much good in the way of benevolence and relief of the poor was done by the religious communities, but with it much evil was disseminated. Hard-earned money was showered into the

temple coffers, and this probably accounts for the existence of so many vast and beautiful shrines throughout the country. Austerely strict lives were enjoined on all who embraced the priesthood, but it is notable that, in all the records of civil wars and disturbances, of wholesale slaughter and general devastation, the temples and the priests invariably come out scathless.

In great essential points, the romance of the Japanese differs from that of Western nations—notably, in the predominance given to man over woman. The noblest profession in the estimation of the Japanese is that of arms. The commonest soldier holds a loftier position than the wealthiest merchant; although with the destruction of the power of the old Daimios, and the consequent reform of the national army on the European model, much of this spirit has died out. Every young Samourai, or man of birth, learnt the use of the sword as soon as he could walk; and it was held as essential for a Japanese gentleman to know how to give and receive blows, as it is for an English gentleman to read and write. The sword was then all-powerful in the land; and many a bloody tale bears testimony to the abuses which sprang up from an almost universal habit of wearing it, and wielding it on very trifling provocation. It is now as much the exception to see a two-sworded swaggerer as it was once the rule. The men of Bizen and Satsuma, stern upholders of the old state of affairs, still affect the obsolete custom; but in Yedo or Yokohama, a man with his swords is stared at by foreigners, and laughed at by natives, as a man afraid to go abroad without them.

Hence, at an age when heroic deeds and chivalrous actions were the pride of the nation, the softer art of love became a matter of very secondary importance, and not, as with us, the keystone of poetry and romance. Love stories and songs are of course innumerable in Japanese literature; but every story and song is so framed as to bring out in striking relief, not the woman, but the man. There is an utter absence of that spirit of knight-errantry which makes our mediæval literature so charming. Japanese heroes would perform prodigies of valour in defence of a clan or a family; but, in the cause of woman, never. Take the well-known story of Kompachi and Komurasaki, so delightfully told by Mr. Mitford in his *Tales of Old Japan*. According to our ideas, Komurasaki, the woman, faithful

and true to her lover in all his misfortunes, and dying on his grave, is the fine, pure character of the tale; but to a Japanese reader, Kompachi, the robber and murderer, the cold and heartless villain, is the claimant for admiration and sympathy.

Woman—with the Japanese as with the Chinese, as with, indeed, most Oriental nations—is very far from sharing the importance of man in human creation. Newly-married couples pray for male offspring; and though it is admitted that woman is necessary in the formation of society, she is regarded rather as a privileged slave than as an equal—much less as invested with the attributes of superiority lavished on her by Western romance writers. So subordinate a part, indeed, does woman take in the every-day affairs of life, that till quite lately—till 1875—women were never allowed to appear on the theatrical stage, and men invariably played the female parts. The great difference, then, between the poetry and romance of the Japanese, as compared with our own, is that whilst our creations treat generally of love, chivalry, and the human sentiments, the Japanese devote themselves to the worship of nature and the supernatural. A reason for this may be found in the fact that Japanese life is altogether of an out-of-door character. To them the word "home"—or the nearest approach to it in their language—conveys none of the simple poetry so touching to Englishmen. There is nothing homely in a Japanese house. By the shifting of a few shutters it can be thrown open to the four winds of heaven; and although the greatest care is taken to keep the wood-work and matting spotlessly clean, a man is far prouder of the possession of a few square yards of garden, than of the noblest palatial residence without a tree or a shrub. Of snugness, cosiness, the charm of family meetings round a common board, they have no idea. A Japanese household is conducted in an irregular, disjointed style, very contrary to our notions of what a happy, comfortable home should be. Men and women eat when they are hungry, sleep when they are tired; if, after the labour of the day, the goodman goes out and stops away all night, there is no anxiety on his behalf; and the same independence of action characterises the life of the women. As for the children, Japan is a very paradise. They are suffered to tumble and wander about without any restriction from the apron-string and perambulator machinery, which makes the lives of many

poor little wretches in England a purgatory. In this absence of any sentiment of attachment to home, as we understand the word, the Japanese resemble the French; but by the poetry with which they invest everything beyond the walls of their houses they amply atone for the want. The average Englishman, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, is perfectly contented to accept the pleasures of home and little else. For the lower classes, four or five holidays a year are amply sufficient to soften the monotony of daily toil; by the classes just above these, more than the statute holidays, with a fortnight or so in the summer, is never demanded. English Sundays we can hardly introduce into the category of holidays. With the Japanese, on the contrary, in addition to the innumerable festivals of which their religion commands the observance, every sixth day is given up to perfect rest from labour, whilst the imagination is ever fertile in inventing excuses for additions to the holiday list. The innate feeling of poetry in the nation is well shown at these holiday makings. We in England are said, too truly, to take our pleasures sadly, and the recollections of Whit Mondays, Boxing Days, and statute holidays, as celebrated by our masses, is coloured with a tint doubly funereal when we call to mind the simple, pleasant town and village festivals of the Japanese. In this faculty of completely throwing aside all worldly cares and considerations in the pursuit of pleasure, they resemble, closely, the French; and but for the costume, the mummers of the New Year's fêtes in Yedo might be of the same race as the "mirliton" players of the Fair of St. Cloud.

The influence of this constant intercourse with the world of nature is plainly visible in the manners, customs, and habits of the Japanese people. The soughing of the wind through the pine trees, the roaring of the mountain torrent, the song of the bird, they weave into the thread of everyday life by a thousand pretty conceits. For a single poetical expression, used by an Englishman in the course of ordinary conversation, the Japanese will employ twenty. The names of their women, their villages, their tea-houses, are redolent of country life; and to the foreigner, well acquainted with the language, nothing can be prettier than the way in which Japanese of all classes clothe the most ordinary commonplaces in a garb of picturesque epithet and simile.

The traveller in Japan cannot fail to remark the way in which the inhabitants take advantage of every pretty spot, or bit of striking scenery, to embellish it by art. The results are generally very happy. On the continent of Europe we should run up a huge hotel, and placard the beauties of a waterfall or valley to the world by advertisements. Consequently the most lovely scenes of Europe have lost a great deal of their romance; they are annually infested by crowds of tourists; the one hotel expands into several; lime-lighting and midnight parties reduce the special feature of the place to a peep-show and a centre of attraction for the votaries of gaiety and fashion. The era of spas and watering-places has probably to come in Japan; Biarritz, Monaco, and Brighton may be imitated in miniature on the shores of the Gulf of Edo; but as yet nature is suffered to remain undisturbed. A beautiful view may be enjoyed from the turf seat of a modest tea-booth; the climb up an especially picturesque hill is generally rewarded by rest in a quaint old temple; cherry-gardens and waterfalls have generally their little circle of tea-houses; but nothing offensive to the eye or taste is ever introduced to destroy the harmonies of nature. As the Japanese wishes to realise during life the idea of travelling through a pleasant garden, so does he delight to invest death with as much poetry as possible. In China the coffins and graves studded about every hill and field are repulsive in the highest degree; in Japan one is never in the presence of death, or reminded at the turn of every corner of our inevitable end. The graveyards are invariably hidden in groves of bamboo and cryptomeria away from the high roads, silent and peaceful in solitude and calm. Even in the midst of the great busy capital, there are dotted about picturesque burial-grounds, beneath the shade of brown old temple eaves or solemn elm trees, which would remain unnoticed by the traveller unadvised how and where to look for them.

One cannot help regretting that modern civilisation will not run hand in hand with poetry and romance; that the path of improvement and reform must be cleared of all obstructions in the shape of old world customs and habits; and that innovation demands the utter extirpation of what it replaces. It is absurd, of course, to wish that a country should never advance, that for the sake of a sentiment it should rot away in its own world of backwardness

and abuses; but, in viewing Japan as the last stronghold of romance, the feeling is difficult to repress. The country is too deeply saturated with old world habits and prejudices to be transformed in a short time; but the influences of the nineteenth century are hard at work, and even now we must travel far into the country to have our love of the romantic and poetic gratified. When the country is entirely thrown open to the world, then we may look for the transformation, but not till then. Wherever foreign influence has been allowed a foothold it has left an indelible mark; but its base of operation in Japan is as yet extremely limited; and to the thousands who have ideas of Western civilisation, there are tens of thousands in complete ignorance even of its meaning, and other tens of thousands who, although they have an imperfect conception of it, are determined to resist its spread to the last.

#### THE BALL AT THE GUILDHALL.

THINGS WHICH THE REPORTERS DID NOT TELL US.

I MAY say at once that I was present at the ball given by the city of London to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and that I was present as an invited guest. I read the accounts of that ball in the daily papers on the following morning. Previous to that time I had entertained a respect for the press; I had read newspaper accounts of balls and festivities, with the belief that, next to going to these things, the best thing was to study the accounts of our special reporters. After reading the accounts in question, these ideas were dissipated. The description of the decorations, and the general aspect of the place, were correct enough. But these are the dry bones of the ball; of the flesh, the human nature of the affair, there is, in the reports, not a shred. I think it as well that the world at large should know something beyond the carpentry and upholstery of an occasion like this; and as reporters, although no doubt estimable persons in their way, and able to take down speeches by the yard, have no—what I may call—soul, I sit down to let the public know what a ball at the Guildhall really is.

I was not at the dinner. My father, an alderman of his ward, was there; I had tickets for the ball. I may say that with me went my father's sister—that is, of course, my aunt—whom I shall

call—for I do not wish the authorship of this article to be traced—Aunt Euphrosyne, and a lady—as I am concealing her name and mine, I may state the truth—to whom I was engaged, and whom I will call Phillis. We, that is my aunt and I, called in the neighbourhood of Bryanston-square for the third person of our trio, at half-past eight o'clock. My father, as I thought at the time, and have since told him, was thoughtless enough to take our carriage and pair, and we had hired a neat brougham. The third person of the trio was—and I mention this fact to show that she is no ordinary person—ready when we called, and we proceeded on our Eastward journey without impediment or delay until we had crossed Holborn Viaduct. Here we fell into the line, and were three-quarters of an hour traversing the short half mile to the Guildhall. That three-quarters of an hour have altered the future of my existence. I entered upon the passage a happy man, my sole care, my sole anxiety being a tendency, a slight tendency, upon the part of my figure towards corpulence. Personally, I think that a certain fulness of form adds to a man's dignity, and that slight curves are more graceful than angles. I object only to the tendency, because men who call themselves your friends are constantly making coarse and silly jokes upon the subject, in which an absence of wit and of good breeding are equally manifest.

From the commencement of Newgate-street, until turning up King-street, the streets were crowded with people, who, for the most part, appeared to consider us, shut up as we were in the carriage, and stationary sometimes for five minutes at a time, as placed there for their special amusement and delectation, and as being as open to remark and comment as if we had been dummies in a hairdresser's shop. I have travelled a good deal, for my father's house has correspondents in most large towns of Europe; and I can safely say that the vulgarity, the impudence, the insolence of that crowd could not have been equalled in Europe. I should analyse that crowd as composed of one quarter of young roughs, of from sixteen to twenty years old; of a third of shop and warehouse girls; of one twelfth of quiet and respectable people, who kept upon the pavement and behaved themselves; and of another third of young men from shops, warehouses, and wharf-

ingers' offices. Until we arrived at the entrance to Cheapside, there were no policemen whatever present—at any rate I did not see one in Newgate-street—and beyond this there were so few that they could not interfere to protect us from insult. I remember once, when I was a little boy, sitting on what was called a stool of penitence, and hearing the nasty things which a number of other little boys and girls, with an almost diabolical frankness, said about me; but that was as nothing to that passage to the ball at the Guildhall. In Newgate-street girls constituted the largest portion of the crowd. They came up to the side of the carriage, put their faces against the windows, laughed and nodded to us freely, and were, I thought—although I am bound to say that neither Phillis nor my aunt agreed with me—really rather good fun than otherwise. When, however, we got into Cheapside, and the throng was composed chiefly of men and boys, things became more unpleasant. "Hollo, here's a hired trap!" shouted one. "Oh, I say," said another, with his face pressed hard against the window, "this ain't fair, two to one, you know." "Fatty is heavy enough for the two of 'em," said a third. "If I was that nice-looking gal, I wouldn't put up with such a duffer as that, not for a moment." "Oh, I say, look at the old 'un in the corner." This was my aunt. "Ain't she been a painting of herself up?" "She means to captivate the prince, she does." "I expec's the prince would rather dance with the young 'un." "You oughter be ashamed of yourself at your age, and with shoulder-bones like them to be in a low dress." "Call the police!" gasped my aunt. I opened the window and looked out; there were policemen scattered along the line ahead, but not sufficient to keep off the crowd, who were saluting the occupants of all the carriages with chaff similar to that which was greeting us. "My dear, I blow a kiss to you," said one to Phillis. This was too much. "Henry James, are you going to get out to that fellow?" Phillis said—she had kept herself in up till now, but she blazed out like a spitfire. "Get out to him, Phillis! What for?" "To knock him down—to thrash him," she said. "Are you going to listen to two ladies being insulted like this, and say nothing? I do believe you are a coward, Henry James." "Oh, come, nonsense; that's too much, Phillis. If I were to get out and hit one of them, I should have a hundred pitch into me; and, bless

me ! I should get a black eye, and shouldn't be able to show myself." "Show yourself!" she says, with a sort of scornful tone that made my clothes feel too large for me—"show yourself! What does it matter about your showing yourself? Here you are with two ladies; you hear them insulted by this low set of blackguards——" "Blackguards!" repeated I in astonishment at hearing such a word in a lady's mouth. "Yes, sir, blackguards!" she went on, all on fire; "and you talk about showing yourself. The City is to blame, in the first place, for inviting ladies to come to their ball, and then taking no steps to prevent their being insulted. But that does not excuse you; you have shown you are a coward, Henry James, and from this moment I have nothing whatever to do with you." Nothing can describe the rest of that journey. Phillis leant back in one corner of the carriage, obstinately silent. My Aunt Euphrosyne leant back in the other and cried quietly, and the tears made two long streaks through the pearl powder on her face, and made her an object for the rest of the evening. There being nothing to say, I sat stoically, while I was called "fatty," and "dough face," and "the claimant," and a dozen other names; and did not even pull up the window, for fear of exciting even more remarks, until the ruffians who had us at their mercy began to squirt at us with the abominable engines which have become of late fashionable in ruffian circles, and which are called, I am given to understand, "tormentors."

When we turned into King-street our sufferings came to an end — the public were kept out here — and we drove unmolested up to the entrance. I got out first, and offered my arm to the ladies. Neither of them took it. Both got out without assistance. We went in at the door without speaking, and just as we got inside there was young Gubbins, the tea-taster, a fellow I have always hated; and as he came up to speak to us, Phillis walked up to him and said, "Mr. Gubbins, I'll take your arm, if you please; it is awkward being here without a man;" and off she walked, as if I wasn't in the world at all. Now, considering that Phillis will have thirty thousand pounds on the day she marries, that was nice for me, wasn't it? "Well, aunt," says I, "perhaps you'd like to run away too." "I don't see anyone to run with," she said, "else I don't know what I might do. However, it does not

matter; when it comes to being insulted for an hour, and your own flesh and blood sitting by quiet, and just nodding at hussies outside the window, it is about time I were gone. There, you need not say anything. I will sit down here while you take my cloak to the cloak-room, and bring me a ticket for it." I took the cloak; I made my way up to a sort of counter, and, after waiting ten minutes, handed over my own coat and hat and the cloak to one of the attendants. He took the hat and coat and returned the cloak, saying, "Ladies' room next door." I tried to get into the ladies' room with the cloak, and was repulsed by an attendant; and I then returned to my aunt, who was even more angry than before at this delay of a quarter of an hour. She was really terrible to see when she found I had brought the cloak back again, though she said nothing, but walked off with it with a sort of stage appearance which spoke volumes. If I had heard slow music play as she disappeared, I shouldn't have been the least surprised. When she came back she took my arm, and we went up, without speaking a single word, into the dancing-room over the entrance; and here, by the greatest good luck, she came across my father, and I saw no more of her. I was not in much of a humour to enjoy myself, especially when I saw Phillis waltzing away with that young Gubbins. I had made up my mind that I should have to dance, although I have doubts whether dancing shows off my figure to advantage, and am inclined to think that a dignified pose is more in keeping with it. However, I was now free to do as I chose—to look on at the humour of the scene, as the poet calls it—and to criticise, from a serene mental elevation, the behaviour of all around. It is entirely owing to the close and critical examination that I made during the evening, that I am able to supplement so exhaustively the superficial observation of the reporters of the press.

I do not know that it ever struck me before, that at City balls you do see more strange-looking people, and more extraordinary dancing than at any other place in the world. Having danced at the Kursaals of Baden and Homburg, the hotel balls at Scarborough, and the assembly balls at Dieppe, Havre, Ostend, and other places, I think that I can speak with authority upon this point. In the first place, age appears at the City to be no obstacle whatever to dancing. Else-

where, people, when they pass middle age, retire from dancing, and take to cards or scandal. Not so in the City. In the quadrilles, you see couples whose united ages would far exceed a century, going through the figures with an accuracy of step which would delight a dancing mistress. In fact, the assumption is overwhelming that their dancing was altogether neglected in youth, and that it was only after attaining to mature age that they placed themselves in the hands of some professor of the dance. The steps they go through are wonderful; the way they pirouette, bring up one foot to the heel of the other, and point their toes, is a thing to see. Not that the performance appears to give them the smallest satisfaction or pleasure. Their faces are set and anxious; not the ghost of a smile ever flits across them; they eschew talk, and give their whole attention to the work in hand. The style of dancing of the younger men and women may be described as bouncing. They bounce across and round; they consider it absolutely *de rigueur* to turn their partners round twice, instead of once, upon every occasion. Altogether, they impress you with the idea that, after all, a little of the stiffness and precision of the elders, of whom I have spoken, would not altogether come amiss in their case. But the square dances were as nothing in comparison with the round. This was not my first impression, but it grew upon me gradually as I went from ball-room to ball-room, and looked on at the gyrations of the dancers. In galops they got on fairly; in polkas they were stiff and awkward; but in waltzing they were—well, they really were—wonderful. To say that one in twenty had the faintest idea of dancing a *trois temps* in time, would be going well within the margin; and the faces of anxiety, of labour, of painstaking care on the part of the males, of simple anguish on that of the females, during the performance of the waltzes, were enough to give a philosopher cause to meditate upon the why and the wherefore people should voluntarily suffer martyrdom in essaying an exercise, of the nature of which they are absolutely ignorant. Then, again, I was led to wonder as to men's clothes. There are no end of fellows I know by sight in the markets, and generally in the City, who look natural enough on ordinary occasions, but who here certainly would have im-

pressed any stranger with the idea that they had never been in evening dress before. Of course, they get their clothes in the West End; but why do not their clothes look the same on them that they do on West-End people? Somehow there was a want of ease and comfort, which was only the more marked when covered by an assumption of a loud, hearty manner and a boisterous jollity. This observation does not apply to women. They somehow seem always at home in fine garments, however unaccustomed to them. The chief point observable about ladies' attire was the extreme variety of dress. Some were magnificently dressed, with diamonds equal to any which would be seen West; some were in half-high dinner dresses; and there were some in simple high dresses, which would not have been out of place at a Quaker meeting. Were I to give you one tithe, or, indeed, a hundredth part of the remarks which I heard made by ladies upon other ladies' dress as I wandered about, I should be considered as libelling human nature. The most offensive feature in the evening—you will understand the word offensive here is not my own, but that of a gentleman in a deputy-lieutenant's uniform, who, after struggling with great perseverance, could not get near enough to see what was going on inside the charmed circle, was the rush to see the Prince and Princess dance their first quadrille after entering the Guildhall. The crush was tremendous, and people stood twenty deep around the barrier. Of course, only the first few ranks could see; but the curiosity of the rest was somewhat satisfied by the information retailed by a number of ill-bred people—please observe that again the word is not my own—who were mounted on chairs and benches in the middle of the hall, and who retailed the result of their observations to the less fortunate crowd below. "There, the dear Princess is talking with the Lord Mayor." "The Prince has just said something to the Duke of Edinburgh." "There, the Duke of Cambridge is crossing now." "How pretty she looks." "Yes; her dress becomes her admirably." And so on. Sooth as was the receipt of all this information, some ill-conditioned people—again the word is not my own—were not satisfied. One lady, and a pretty heavy one too, lifted herself above the crowd by placing her hands on two gentlemen's shoulders, while they fairly hoisted her up. In

another case, a gentleman—a young husband, I imagine—kneeled on one knee, while his wife stood on the other. Some ladies contented themselves with occasional jumps; as, however, nature has not intended the human eye for the “instantaneous process,” they gained little except silent objurgation from those on whose toes they alighted. I could write a great deal more, but I have written enough to show how ridiculously great are the shortcomings of reporters of the press. Not one of the papers said a word about these things. I am told that the ladies’ cloak-room was a scene of the wildest confusion, and that finally almost everyone took anything they could get. My Aunt Euphrosyne, whose cloak was a new one, spent three hours in that room in search of it. She failed, and came home in tears with my father. They arrived at half-past five, three hours after I had gone to sleep. My father rose in a very bad temper next day, and blamed me because aunt fastened herself, in her rage, upon him—just as if I could help it! I hear rumours of Phillis being engaged to that young Gubbins; as I said before, I always did hate that fellow. My aunt sent for her solicitor the very morning after the ball, and made a new will. I have not heard its exact contents, but I am sure that it is to my disadvantage. Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that I shall not go to any more balls at the Guildhall.

#### LITTLE WILLIE.

SUCH a day to leave him, laid in his lonely grave;  
Hark how the north wind whistles through the  
thunder of the wave!  
Such a day to leave him, where the wild blast sweeps  
and swirls,  
With the cold rains plashing over him, and the sods  
on his golden curls!  
Just a short week since we watched him, down on  
the sunny shore,  
And smiled to hear his ringing laugh blend with the  
breakers' roar;  
Just one short week—a start, a cry, a crash from the  
falling cliff—  
Ah, pretty lips closed dumb and dead; light feet  
laid still and stiff!  
Such a day to leave him! How his blue eyes danced  
and shone,  
And the colour glowed in his round cool cheek but  
one brief week ago!  
Hard he fared, and cold he slept, yet his little life  
was joy;  
Sea, sand, and sunshine Nature gave to bless our  
bonnie boy.  
Such a day to leave him! What though the parson blest  
The black earth where we put him down, what does  
the child with rest?  
He loved his life, and light, and play—they were all  
the boon he had;  
Yet few the tears he ever shed, the bold and blithe-  
some lad.

It had not been so hard perhaps the narrow grave to make,  
If the seagulls had been floating where the waves  
showed like a lake;  
If the daisies had been springing, and the kindly sun-  
light warm,  
And the green grass waiting for him like a mother's  
sheltering arm.  
But while the whole air thrills and throbs with the  
great sea's angry thunder,  
And the Churchyard Head looks grimly on the white  
surf boiling under,  
With the pale rank grasses shivering 'neath stinging  
hail and snow,  
Our joyous, happy darling—it is hard to leave him  
so.  
Well, God took him in his merriment, our God whose  
ways are wise;  
He is safe from cold and hunger, in his home there  
in the skies;  
But, oh! that the wild winds and waves would hush  
them for an hour,  
While up upon the Head we leave our early-gathered  
flower.

#### FOUR CHAPTERS ON LACE.

##### CHAPTER IV.

THOSE curious visitors to Westminster Abbey who succeed in seeing the waxen effigies in the little room filled with those ghastly relics, will remark the rich quality of the lace which adorns them. The lace tucker and double sleeves (“engaging” sleeves) of Queen Mary are of Venice raised point, and King William wears a rich lace cravat and ruffles. There is some fine lace on the figure of Charles the Second, and also on that of the Duchess of Buckingham—the “mad” duchess, daughter of James the Second.\* Lest muscular Christians—heroes of peaceful contests on Cam and Isis, at Lord's or Prince's—should think a taste for lace an indication of effeminacy, it may be well to show that, as King William was to Queen Mary in devotion to Venice point and “right Mechlin,” so were the soldiers of Marlborough to civilians. It has already been told how the French army was on one occasion brought to a standstill for want of lace; and a very slight acquaintance with the literature of the Queen Anne period will suffice to convince the student that Jack Churchill himself, the fire-eating Cutts, and other gallant officers, whose names are written large in the history of England, were every whit as much addicted to costly “steinkirks” as their Gallic enemies. Their successors, too, kept up the character of the army for wearing

\* As these waxwork effigies, which formed part of every state funeral of olden times, are not shown along with the other sights in the Abbey, readers of ALL THE YEAR ROUND are informed that admission may be obtained on application by letter to “the Canon in Residence, Westminster.”

costly lace, until the ungraceful stock replaced the rich cravat and "jabot." In the "Volunteers, or the Stock-Jobbers," occurs this remarkable passage :

"SIR NICHOLAS. I must make great haste; I shall ne'er get my Points and Laces done up time enough.

"MAJOR-GENERAL B. What say'st, young fellow? Points and Laces for camps?

"SIR NICHOLAS. Yes; Points and Laces. Why, I carry two laundresses on purpose. . . . Would you have a gentleman go undressed in a camp? Do you think I would see a camp, if there were no dressing? Why, I have two campaign suits, one trimmed with Flanders' Lace, and the other with rich Point!"

The "World," to which the elegant Lord Chesterfield was a contributor, improved the occasion with a little cheap moralising and an impudent plagiarism. "Nor can I behold the lace and the waste of finery in their clothing, but in the same light as the silver plates and ornaments on a coffin. Indeed, I am apt to impute their going to battle so trimmed and adorned, to the same reason a once fine lady painted her cheeks just before she expired, that she might not look frightful when she was dead."

To war the troops advance,  
Adorned and trim like females for the dance;  
Down sinks Lothario, sent by one dire blow,  
A well-dress'd hero to the shades below.

Even so late as Sheridan's time, this military dandyism had not departed from us. The justice's daughter says to her mamma, in "St. Patrick's Day": "Dear, to think how the sweet fellows sleep on the ground, and fight in silk stockings and lace ruffles."

In Queen Anne's time, ladies' head-dresses of lace were called, shortly, "heads," and were used to decorate the high "Fontanges" or "commode" rising on the female head "like Bow steeple." Before the close of the reign, the lofty "commode" or "fal-lal," as it was sometimes called, suddenly collapsed. It had shot up to an extravagant height, "In somuch that the female part of our species were much taller than the men. We appeared," says the Spectator, "as grasshoppers before them."

The cost of a lace head was high: a Brussels head is put down at forty pounds, and a French point head and ruffles at double the money; but these articles would last a lifetime, and half-a-dozen heads were considered an ample supply for a princess—as a couple of

Mechlin cravats supplied the wardrobe of a fine gentleman. Addison did not fail to make fun of the sudden rage for china at the expense of lace, and accuses the women of exchanging "their Flanders point for punchbowls and mandarins, thus picking their husband's pocket, who is often purchasing a huge china vase when he fancies that he is buying a fine head for his wife." Lace was a favourite lover's bribe to an Abigail. Silvio, in the bill of costs he sends in to the widow Zelinda, at the termination of his unsuccessful suit, makes a charge for a "piece of Flanders lace" to her waiting-woman. Swift addresses a "young lady," in his peculiar strain: "And when you are among yourselves, how naturally, after the first compliments, do you entertain yourself with the price and choice of lace, and apply your hands to each other's lappets and ruffles, as if the whole business of life and the public concern depended on the cut of your petticoats."

Not satisfied with lace when alive, both men and women craved for it as a decoration for their grave-clothes. In Malta, Greece, and the Ionian Islands, the practice of burying people in lace has acquired an unsavoury reputation, on account of the custom of rifling the tombs and selling the lace—often in a filthy condition—in the market. At Palermo, the mummies in the catacombs of the Capuchin Convent are adorned with lace; and in northern and middle Europe this fashion prevailed for a long period. In the church of Revel lies the Duc de Croÿ, a general of Charles the Twelfth, in full costume, with a rich flowing tie of fine guipure. He was never buried, by-the-way, his corpse having been arrested for debt; so that he remains, Mahomet-like, suspended between earth and sky. The Duke of Alva—not the great duke, but one who died in Paris in 1739—was, by his own direction, interred in a shirt of the finest Holland, trimmed with new point-lace; a new coat, embroidered in silver; a new wig; his cane on the right, his sword on the left, of his coffin. The beautiful Aurora Königsmarck lies buried at Quedlinburg amid a mass of the richest Angleterre, Malins, and guipure; and the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield "was laid in her coffin in a very fine Brussels lace head; a Holland shift, with a tucker of double ruffles; and a pair of new kid gloves." In her lifetime she had been a great judge of lace, and treasured a statuette of the Earl of Strafford, finely

carved in ivory by Grinling Gibbons, entirely for the beauty of its "Vandyke" lace collar. The lines of Pope have immortalised the story of Mrs. Oldfield's death. A ridiculous enactment had been made commanding English people to be buried in woollen :

"Odious ! in woollen ! 'twould a saint provoke !"  
(Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke).

"No, let charming chintz and Brussels lace  
Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face ;  
One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead—  
And—Betty—give this cheek a little red."

All this seems ridiculous and melancholy enough at first sight; but yet Mrs. Oldfield had a method in her madness. Her solicitude as to her appearance is explained by the fact that, previous to her interment in Westminster Abbey, she was to lie in state in the Jerusalem Chamber.

The opinion of Dr. Johnson on lace is worth quoting as an admirable specimen of the style of the learned doctor, when plunging, like a bull into a china-shop, at a subject of which he was utterly incompetent to judge. The fine meshes of point-lace were not strong enough to hold the lover of veal-pie with plums in it. "A Brussels trimming," he thundered to Mrs. Piozzi, "is like bread-sauce; it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing instead of it; but sauce was invented to heighten the flavour of our food, and trimming is an ornament to the manteau, or it is nothing."

After the Johnsonian period point-lace went so completely out of fashion in England, that it remained buried for years in old wardrobes and chests. In the beginning of the present century, the taste for massive garnitures of ancient point had so completely vanished, that in many families collections of lace of great value were, at the death of their owners, handed over as rubbish to the waiting-maid. Mrs. Bury Palliser tells two capital lace stories, "in this connection." A lady, who had very fine old lacé, bequeathed her "wardrobe and lace" to some young friends, who, going after her death to take possession of their legacy, were surprised to find nothing but new lace. The old faithful Scotch servant (oh, those "faithful retainers !"), on being asked what had become of the old needle-points, said, "Deed it's a' there, 'cept a wheen auld duds, black and ragged I flingit on the fire." Another collection met with an equally melancholy fate. The maid, not liking to give it over to the legatees in its coffee-coloured hue, sewed it care-

fully together, and put in a strong soap lye on the fire to simmer all night. When she took it out in the morning, it was reduced to a jelly. Much fine lace also came to an end in the hands of children. Many old ladies recollect having, in their childhood, dressed out their dolls in the finest point d'Alençon, so little was that magnificent lace valued at that time.

Meanwhile, lace-making of a kind went on in England as in other countries. It is discouraging to be unable to say very much in favour of the lace manufacture of England. Time out of mind attempts have been made to import lace-making into this country, but the lace hitherto produced has mostly been inferior to Continental work. Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire have long been the seat of lace manufacture—when and by whom established there is no evidence to show. Concerning Bedfordshire, there is, of course, a "tradition," or rather two—a Catholic and a Protestant tradition. The latter has it that lace-making was brought over by the Flemings, who fled from the Alva persecutions—the former ascribes its introduction to the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic. "Thei seyn"—as Sir John Maundevile put it—that when Katharine of Aragon retired for two years to her manor of Ampthill, while her appeal to Rome was yet pending, she took care that the art of lace-making should be imparted to the peasantry of Bedfordshire, as a means of subsistence. As usual in these cases, there was a local custom which supported the legend with its authority, such as it was. Until recently, the lace-makers held "Cattern's Day," the 25th November (the Feast of St. Katharine), as a high festival, into which entered tea and cake—called "Cattern cake"—music, dancing, and a supper of boiled rabbits smothered in onions. 1531 is rather an early date for the introduction of lace-work into England—but who could be critical when rabbits smothered in onions formed part of the festival? The lace and lace schools of Buckinghamshire have received frequent mention. Great Marlow, Olney, Stoney Stratford, Aylesbury, and Newport Pagnel were all famous for lace of a fair description, but much inferior to that produced in Flanders. The best feature of the Midland laces was their beautiful hexagonal mesh, like the "réseau" of point d'Alençon. A good deal of lace was also made in Dorsetshire and Wilt-

shire. Defoe, in the excess of his patriotism, makes a tremendous fuss about Blandford, and declares the lace made there "so exquisitely fine, as I think I never saw better in Flanders, France, or Italy." Such specimens of Blandford lace as have survived to modern times, entirely fail to support the opinion of the author of *Robinson Crusoe*; but perhaps he spoke according to his lights after all. A more important county, and a longer lived, so far as lace manufacture is concerned, is Devonshire, famous for "bone-lace and cyder." From time to time very fair lace has been made at Honiton. Fuller is very enthusiastic on the subject of bone-lace, as it was absurdly called. "Much of this is made in and about Honiton, and weekly returned to London. Modern is the use thereof in England, and not exceeding the middle of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Let it not be condemned for a superfluous wearing—because it doth neither hide nor heat—seeing it doth adorn. Besides, though private persons pay for it, it stands the state in nothing; not expensive of bullion like other lace, costing nothing save a little thread, descended on with art and industry. Hereby, many children who otherwise would be burthensome to the parish, prove beneficial to their parents. Yea, many lame in their limbs, and impotent in their arms, if able in their fingers, gain a livelihood thereby; not to say that it saveth some thousands of pounds yearly, formerly sent over seas to fetch lace from Flanders."

Honiton lace is without doubt the best ever made in England. Its method of manufacture is that of second or third rate Brussels; and as an appliquéd lace it is, perhaps, doubtful whether it deserves to be mentioned in the same paper with really artistic work. Honiton was famous for its "sprigs" sewn on to the ground, both sprigs and ground being made on the pillow.

Enormous prices were paid by the Honiton lace-makers for Flemish thread, rising, it is said, to a hundred guineas the pound during the war with France. The workwomen were also well paid, their wages being calculated in this wise: the lace ground was spread out on the counter, and the worker herself desired to cover it with shillings; and as many coins as found place on her work she carried away as the fruit of her labour. Real Honiton ground went out of date with the invention of

bobbin-net, on which the sprigs were "applied," until that form of lace went out of date altogether, being superseded by the modern guipure—the Honiton of to-day—which composed the bridal dresses of the Crown Princess of Prussia, the Princess Louis of Hesse, and the Princess of Wales.

Modern guipure is almost a reversal of the old style of "application." The sprigs, after being made on the pillow, are sewed upon a piece of blue paper, and then united either on the pillow by "cutworks" or "purlings," or else joined with the needle with various stitches—lacet-point, réseau, cutwork, button-hole stitch (the most effective of all), and purling, which is made by the yard. It has long been a reproach to the Devonshire lace-makers that they invent nothing—originate nothing—their happiest efforts being merely imitations of Flemish models. The Honiton lace at the International Exhibition of 1862 could ill bear comparison with the fabrics of France and Belgium. The designs were crowded and spiritless; heavy medallions, and clumsy arabesques, encircled with bouquets of flowers—poor imitations of nature.

A great deal of trouble has been experienced in persuading the lace-workers of Devonshire to adopt newer and better designs. For a long while they insisted on sticking to their old patterns, but at last some impression has been made on them by the authorities of South Kensington, who have recently supplied them with a large number of beautiful designs.

One effect of the gradual degradation of taste which led to the fineness of the résean being ultimately considered of more importance than the beauty of the pattern, was one of those determinations of the human intellect in one direction, which rarely fail to achieve success in the end. After innumerable failures, bobbin-net was at last made by Heathcote's machine, and the value of the "clear ground" was gone for ever. Bobbin-net machines were not only set up in England, but in Brussels, for the purpose of making the double and triple twisted net, upon which the pillow flowers are sewed, to produce the so-called "point appliquéd." This extra fine Brussels net has become deservedly celebrated, and consumes a large quantity of Scotch cotton thread annually. Soon after the triumph of England with bobbin-net, the Jacquard system was tried at Lyons for making lace by machinery, and no sooner were

the experiments successful, than Nottingham began the manufacture of machine lace on a large scale. At the International Exhibition of 1862, Nottingham exhibited Spanish laces, most faithful copies of the costly pillow-made Barcelona; imitations of Mechlin, the brodé and picot executed by hand; Brussels needle-point; Caen blondes and Valenciennes, rivalling those of Calais; also the black laces of Chantilly and Mirecourt. Machine lace has had a curious effect. It has almost exterminated the inferior kinds of handmade lace, but it has not diminished the demand for the finer fabrics of the pillow and the needle. On the contrary, the finest work of Alençon and Brussels has been sought more eagerly than ever by the rich, since machinery has brought the wearing of lace within the reach of all classes.

It is true that for a while it seemed as if choice lace were to become a thing of the past, but with the success of the romantic school in painting, and in the drama, came a reaction in favour of everything mediæval, or "thereabouts." In dress, too, the classical style went out, and mediæval customs were eagerly studied, as being likely to supply ideas for the modern romantic style.

Thus, after an eclipse of some thirty or forty years, the taste for old lace shone out again as part of that passion for ancient furniture, gold and silver work, and crockery, which endures even to this day. Old chests were raked out; the stock of convents was eagerly bought up; theatrical wardrobes and masquerade shops were sifted thoroughly to supply a sudden mania for magnificent "garnitures" of Alençon or guipure. Sydney Lady Morgan and Lady Stepney quarrelled weekly over the respective value and richness of their points; and Lady Blessington left at her death several chests filled with antique lace. Both in England and France lace was the rage; but the ignorance of the wearers led to some ludicrous effects. Knowing nothing of the various schools of lace, enthusiasts covered themselves with odds and ends of all sorts, no matter what, so long as it was old. An English lady once appeared at a ball given by the French Embassy at Rome, and actually boasted that she wore, on the apron of her dress, every known description of lace, from cut work of the fifteenth to point d'Alençon of the eighteenth century. As the subject became better understood, and costumes were arranged with some

regard to coherence, a race of collectors sprang up, who accumulated magnificent stores of the best examples of every school. Mrs. Bury Palliser, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, the late Mrs. MacCallum, Mrs. Bolckow, and Mrs. Austen formed cabinets of lace; and finally the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851 organised a loan exhibition of lace three years ago. Since that time the passion for collecting lace has increased, and the typical pieces at the South Kensington Museum have become the object of much zealous study; but while lace-making is studied as an art, it is undeniable that the fashion for wearing the finest kind of point has, except in the case of the "lappets" worn with court-dress, almost vanished. Possibly this change in fashion is due to the vulgarising influence of the cheap imitations of the old guipure known as Cluny, Yak, and Ecru—the latter of which are tinted to resemble the old laces stained with coffee-grounds. Other ancient laces are imitated with considerable success, so far as general effect is concerned, but, of course, appear rough and clumsy when contrasted with the genuine old work. By the fashion of to-day the opportunities for displaying grand pieces of lace have been much reduced. Lace "berthes" and flounces are articles that no lady, who respects her reputation as a woman of fashion, would dream of putting on.

At the moment of writing taste runs on the soft, the yielding, the clinging, and the vaporous—and old needle-point retires for the nonce into the cabinets of the curious. Modern Valenciennes, made in Belgium, is all the rage, being used in enormous quantities for "plissés" or quilling, for fichus, and other purposes. The simpler kinds of Valenciennes are those now preferred—a comparatively straight edge being the most effective for the fashionable quilling made of muslin and edged with narrow lace of the softer kinds. Rich passementerie is also much used, made up on black tulle, and enriched with gold, silver, and straw. The "serious" laces are crowded out by the lighter and—artistically considered—inferior kinds, but, like all good art, must again come to the front in time, and will then have the immeasurable advantage of being properly understood. In other departments of needlework the stiff old samplers, the fluffy dogs, and the Berlin wool shepherds have been exchanged for designs by excellent artists, and there is little doubt that elaborate lace-

work will, before long, resume its proper position as a decorative art. In the meanwhile the capacity of lace can best be studied from old models, of which there is great abundance scattered over England and the Continent. The purpose of the present series of papers has been to conduct the reader of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* over the boundaries of Laceland, and the writer must now bid her farewell with the recommendation—if she wish to know fair Laceland aright—to devote her attention to the excellent and concise volume on Ancient Needle-point and Pillow Lace, written by Mr. Alan G. Cole; the comprehensive *La Dentelle*, of Monsieur Joseph Seguin; the delightful History of Lace, by Mrs. Bury Palliser; and the typical collection of lace in the South Kensington Museum—catalogued and described by that learned and pleasant author.

## GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "*A HOUSE OF CARDS*," &c. &c.

BOOK V. LADY OLIVE DESPARD'S STORY.

CHAPTER VI. IDA.

"I WAS but a sorry travelling companion for Griffith during our long journey to Plymouth on the following day; but he, too, had matter enough in his thoughts to occupy him, and render him indifferent to my unsociable preoccupation. I lived all my life over again in those hours. It seemed to me that my memory took hold of me, like a powerful, live being, and dragged me along with it in a strong, relentless grasp, hurrying me through the rough ways, and up the steep paths, and past the gloomy defiles, breathless, weary, but constrained to follow. How horribly painful is the waking up of the past all but unimpressionable natures must know, or those people whose lives have been all even, temperate, wisely-graduated prosperity; pattern people, who have never attempted to rough-hew the ends of destiny for themselves, but have had them gracefully shaped by a propitious divinity. This awakening of the past was horribly painful to me, but not exclusively painful; it was deeply interesting, too, and it filled me with a great longing to know all that could be learned about the place at which Edward Randall had died, and the people who had witnessed and tended his last hours. I did not grieve for him; the separation between us had

been so total, and the epoch in my life which he had filled was so far away, that there was not in the knowledge of his death the pang of hopeless parting. Providence had been merciful to the wanderer, whose lot was of his own wilful making; he had found a peaceful refuge at the last, And 'room for repentance?' I believed that, too; feeling, by an instinct, that the woman whom he had wronged more deeply than he had wronged me—to whom he was mysteriously destined to bring utter misery and, ultimately, death in one of its most terrible forms—had been a ministering spirit to him. My mind busied itself in countless conjectures concerning the details of this strangely-revealed story, and the actors in it. What manner of woman was she whose history had touched mine at one single point years ago, though we had never seen each other's faces, into whose confidence I had thus unconsciously intruded? That I could never know; but from what her step-daughter would tell me, in time I should be able to construct an image of her in my fancy. It should be a fair and gracious image, to be a true one, I felt sure.

"The task which Mrs. Pemberton's prevision—verified so differently from her idea of what might be—had set Mr. Dwarris was, indeed, a difficult one; and he the last person in the world calculated to fulfil such a task. I followed out the complications of it with many a question to which time only could bring an answer, and with many baseless conjectures. Had this Mr. Dale, against whom Mrs. Pemberton warned Mr. Dwarris, returned to England? Had he, too, learned the fate of the Albatross; the death of the woman who suspected him; the death of the child, whom he would have regarded as an unwelcome intruder; and the rescue of Ida? It was almost certain that he was informed of these circumstances, and that if Mrs. Pemberton's theory was in all respects correct, he would before long present himself upon the scene. Then the thought came to me, and startled me: What if he had appeared upon it already; what if, on arriving at Plymouth, I should find Mr. Dale there? It would not be unlikely, under the circumstances, that Ida should have communicated with him first, and if she really had done so, and he suspected a probable antagonist, already forewarned against him, in Mr. Dwarris, he would have induced her to be cold and reserved in her first communication with

her relatives. I know how easily one may be led astray, in calculating the tactics of another person, by making a mistake as to the amount of knowledge or ignorance of that person; and I did not take it for granted that Mr. Dale had any knowledge of Mrs. Pemberton's proceedings. But the shrewd and unscrupulous man whom she indicated would, I imagined, have been tolerably certain to prejudice the girl's mind against any possibly antagonistic influence, however short the time in which he had had an opportunity of doing so. Perhaps Mr. Dale had not come to England, or had gone away again, in the belief that the Albatross was lost with all on board, and that the golden prize was no longer to be won.

"The hours flew by while I remembered, mused, and speculated; and at last we reached Plymouth, where the first object I beheld on the railway-platform was Barr. He opened the carriage-door, greeted us warmly, and said he had just come from the George Hotel, where he had been making inquiries for Miss Pemberton, who was reported to be much better, and anxiously expecting her cousin and myself. Barr is one of the most quietly-useful persons in the world, and he instantly communicates to one a pleasant sense that one needs not take any more trouble about anything.

"It's all right about rooms, and I've ordered dinner," he remarked, in as business-like a tone as if it had been understood that he was to be there, and I had sent him directions. "Very nice, snug old place, all solid mahogany, and slippery black horsehair, and marine emblems; silver anchors under glass shades; big humming shells on the chimney-pieces, and Admiral Lord Nelson keeping the old king company in the hall. Are you all right, Olive? George Hotel!"

"Talking thus, Barr packed up our party in a cavernous hackney-carriage, and we were presently driving through the old seaport town. It was already late, and immediately on our arrival at the hotel I sent word to Miss Pemberton that we were there.

"The chambermaid returned to my room accompanied by Miss Pemberton's maid. This person was a very handsome young woman, with regular features, a fine figure, and self-possessed manners. She was dressed in deep mourning, which probably added to her naturally ladylike appearance. Miss Pemberton begged me to go to her at

once; she would prefer to see Mr. Griffith Dwarris a little later. I at once went with the young woman to Miss Pemberton's room, and before I reached the far end of the interminable corridor in which the dingy door lurked, I had satisfied myself on one point. Miss Pemberton's maid was her amanuensis, Bessy West.

"I entered a square low room, lighted by tall wax candles, and furnished in the style which Barr had described—the style which affected heavy mahogany and slippery black horsehair—and crouching in a corner of a huge sofa, covered with the latter uncongenial material, I saw a slight figure in a black gown, a pale, timid face with brown hair lying in short curls above the forehead, and brown eyes with a look of sadness in them which touched my heart.

"Ida Pemberton rose quickly to her feet, stood hesitating for a moment; but the next I had both her hands in mine, and was kissing her 'as if she belonged to me,' as the Irish people say.

"She was quite 'at home' with me in a few minutes, and my first clear impression about her was that my fancy had never been farther from the truth in my life than when it had pictured Ida Pemberton as a cold, hard, unapproachable, selfish young person, who would be unresponsive to kindness and indifferent to affection. She quivered with agitation when I told her of the warm welcome which awaited her at the Dingle House; her pale face flushed when I spoke of the earnest desire of all concerned to compensate to her, as far as might be possible, for the terrible loss she had sustained; and large slow tears gathered in her eyes and rolled over the cheeks which were sadly wanting in youthful plumpness when I touched, very lightly, on her loneliness of her second voyage, and the danger and rescue of the first. She said little, beyond:

"You are very, very kind. How good of you to come to me. I do so want to get to Wrottesley."

"My dear," I said, "try to say, and to think, that you want to get home. Home is the right word henceforth."

"I will, indeed I will—indeed I do, since I have seen you."

"I was called away to dinner, and it was settled that I should bring Griffith to see her afterwards. I left her to the perusal of a letter from Audrey with which I had been charged at the last moment, and returned to my two companions, who were

very curious to hear my report of the interview.

"I consider it a horrid shame that I am not to see her to-night," said Barr. "It could not possibly make any difference, because Dwarris is just as much of a stranger as I am, and I shouldn't frighten her a bit more than he."

"Griffith, however, frightened Ida more than I liked to see. It bespoke great nervous weakness that, after she had got over seeing me, she should start violently and utter a gasping cry, when her cousin advanced to take her hand. She said some word which we did not catch, and sank down upon the sofa, pressing one hand over her eyes, and clutching the other above her heart. Her maid, who was in the room, was evidently alarmed by her emotion, for when I called her she drew near with a white face and trembling hands, and looked at Griffith with no friendly expression. Ida did not recover composure for some moments, and during them her maid's demeanour attracted my attention. It was strangely unsympathetic, notwithstanding her paleness and trembling; and as she held a glass of water to her mistress's lips, she smiled, a slow, slight, but distinctly contemptuous smile.

"She is better now," said Griffith, who was distressed and puzzled by Ida's nervousness, and had moved uneasily away from her.

"Oh yes; she is better now, sir," said Bessy West, directing a steady gaze at Griffith.

"Ida raised her head, sighed, and passed her hand across her eyes.

"You are my cousin Griffith?" she asked, in a low, uncertain voice.

"Certainly I am," he answered, taking a seat by her sofa, "and I am sorry to have upset you so much. You must get stronger, for there are a great many people to see at home."

"Are there? Besides my uncle and Audrey?"

"Oh yes, ever so many!"

"And then he went on to talk to her very soothingly and judiciously; and she grew quiet and at ease with him, though she still looked askance at him with a strange expression, half of fear, half of inquiry. After a few minutes Bessy West had left the room.

"I forbade, in the interests of us all, a prolonged interview, and dismissed Griffith to join Barr after half an hour. Before I bade Ida good night, I had satisfied myself

that she was not really ill, and that the best restorative for her nerves would be the immediate change to the pleasant society, and the novel interests, of the Dingle House. She was pleased at the prospect, and declared herself quite ready for the journey; but I knew she was not that, so arranged that it should be commenced on the third day from the present, if she should be then feeling well. She begged that she might breakfast with us next morning, and I gladly assented, and told her she would then have to summon up her courage to meet another stranger, my brother, Lord Barr.

"She only laughed at this, unconcernedly, and asked me whether Lord Barr had blue eyes, light brown hair, a pleasant voice, and a liking for dogs? As Barr answered to this description accurately, I said 'Yes; why?' and she replied:

"Because then I'm sure I've seen him. It was just getting dusk, and I was looking out of the window, when a gentleman like him came up to the door and began talking to the head-waiter, on the pavement, and two dogs crossed the street immediately and went to him. I thought they were his own, for he acknowledged their attentions at once."

"No; he has no dogs with him; but that is exactly like Barr." She asked me two or three more trifling questions about my brother, and then I left her for the night. Thinking of all that had passed, a little later, while Virginie was brushing my hair, it struck me as another instance of her nervousness that Ida had said nothing at all about her cousin. Some remark about him would have been natural under the circumstances; if only to tell me whether he was at all like what she had expected him to be; but Ida did not make any.

"I may as well record in this place, though it did not occur until the following day, an incident of some importance to the little household at the Dingle House, preparing for the reception of Miss Pemberton. And it is most easily and succinctly recorded in the words of my letter to Audrey:

"And now, having told you all about Ida, though you will so soon see her for yourself, I must proceed to some prosaic business. Frosty, or Miss Minnie, or some one, must look out for you, to find a maid for Ida. West will not remain with her, and indeed I think it is just as well she should not. But a fine London damsel would not do for Wrottesley, whereas a

tidy Wrottesley girl will do very well for Ida, at present. West is a superior person, and objectionably handsome, but she does not like Ida, and Ida does not like her. I daresay their perils, shared together, have distorted the proper relations between them; however that may be, they will part with mutual satisfaction. We take her to London with us on Thursday, and she proposes to go thence to Ireland, where she has friends and prospects. I think you cannot do better than ask Miss Minnie, or Mrs. Kellett—she knows everybody about the place—to find you a fit and proper person.'

"'Our suspense about ourselves did not last long,' said Ida, as she was relating to us the terrible story of the fate of the Albatross, in the evening of the following day, 'for the ship which we saw from the boat took us on board in a very short time; but it was frightful to see the end of our own ship. It was frightful to everybody in the boat; but what was it to me? At first, I was so terrified when they hurried me into the boat that I did not know that—she—was not with me, and that the baby was in the shawl tied round my neck. I heard it cry, and its little hands clutched at my face, and then I knew; but no one could tell me, or heeded me when I asked where its mother was. At last, when the ship was only a flaming mass on the water—our boat seemed to be floating in flame, or blood—someone made me understand that Bessy West was in the boat with me, but that Mrs. Pemberton had been left in the ship. I believe I was quite wild for a minute, and tried to struggle out of the boat—I suppose I had some mad impulse to get hold of her—but they held me down; and then I shut my eyes, and rocked the child in my arms, until I heard a terrible roar, and several voices cried "She's gone!" And then I looked up, and the Albatross was there no longer. They were rowing fast, and fragments of all sorts were in the waves, some still smoking, and were washed past us. When the ship we had seen was near us, the men ceased rowing; and then, then I saw something in the hollow of a wave, not far from the side of the boat. No, no' (she raised herself and sat upright in her chair, as she saw us look at one another) 'it was not what you think—it was not so dreadful as that—it was Dick—my horse, my beautiful favourite horse, that poor papa gave me. I saw his mane, and his neck, and his wide open eyes and nostrils. He was not dead, but the next moment he

was swept far out of my sight; and I don't recollect anything else until I found myself in a berth on board a strange ship, and someone told me that we were quite safe, and that my baby brother was in the hands of Bessy West. Then I was ill, I believe, and they cut my hair off, and I hardly remember being taken on shore at West Falkland. Some kind people there divided the saved passengers from the Albatross among their houses, and a clergyman's wife, Mrs. Outram, took charge of me, and the baby, and Bessy West. It seemed very long to the other people, I believe, until a ship came which would take us to England; but it did not seem either a long or a short time to me. I did not remember. I know now that I used to fancy I was at home, walking with papa, or talking to Dick, and I was quite content. I did not want to get up, or to go out, or to see anybody; I used just to lie there, and all the people I knew or cared for used to come in at one door, smile at me as they passed, and go out by the other. Even when I got better, it all seemed to have happened a long time ago, and I felt quite stunned and indifferent. Mrs. Outram was very kind, and I had every care and attention. At length I asked if I might see my baby brother, and they told me "No—he was gone to his father and mother in heaven." That made me better able to feel. Then I could realise how Mary had saved me, and given her life to do it, and how she had trusted me to save the child!'

"She stopped, with a shiver.

"'My dear,' I said, 'you must not agitate yourself. The child was well cared for, too, no doubt; and you being unable to take care of it was not your fault.'

"'No, it was my fate.'

"She said these words as if unconsciously. She little thought that I held the clue to their meaning; that I understood the cause of the spasm of pain which crossed her face; that I read remorse in her soul for the grief she had caused her step-mother, and regret in it for the lost opportunity for atonement, which the child would have afforded her.

"'Not long after,' she resumed, with a sigh, 'we were taken on board the Collingwood. There is nothing to tell about our voyage. It was prosperous and quick. Of course'—here she smiled, and her face lighted up prettily—"we did not possess anything in the world, except the clothes we were saved from the burning ship in. The people at the Falklands gave us everything—we passengers I mean—and got up

a subscription for the seamen who were in the boat. Mrs. Outram gave me clothing for the voyage, and a little money for Bessy West and myself.'

"There's a great deal of very solid-looking luggage belonging to you at home," said Griffith.

"Ah, yes; Mrs. Pemberton's treasures," said Ida, sadly. "They were relics of the happy old time, and I don't know why she had them sent to England in another ship. It is well she did so—they are all I have left now. My father's portrait and Mary's are in one of those boxes."

"I was glad to hear this; I wanted to know what like the face of the woman whose history had touched mine at such strange distant points had been. My attention strayed, and when I recalled it, Griffith and his cousin were talking of Audrey.

"I daresay I shall not be the least like what she expects, or she the least like what I expect," Ida was saying.

"Perhaps not. Am I like what you expected—that is, if you condescended to expect anything about me?"

"As Ida answered, 'No, you are not,' she blushed so deeply and painfully, that I could see Griffith was confounded by the effect of his trifling matter-of-course question; and I struck in with some observation, which turned the attention of the two young men to myself.

The following morning brought me letters from Wrottesley; among them one for Ida, enclosed in one to me from Audrey. I had sent to inquire for her, and knew she had not left her room; so I went thither, to give her Audrey's letter. I found her alone, sitting in her dressing-gown at a monumental mahogany dressing-table, before a huge and unaccommodating looking-glass, on which her eyes were fixed in a dreamy unseeing way; her hands lay in her lap, and her face was pale and frowning. She must have answered 'Come in!' to my knock at the door, mechanically, for she did not notice me until I came close to her, and held out Audrey's letter, as I said:

"Good morning, my dear. Are you not well?"

"I beg your pardon," she said, hurriedly, "I did not hear you. I am not very well to-day. A letter for me? Oh, thank you!"

"It is near breakfast-time," I said; "can I help you to dress, as I see West is not here?"

"She thanked me, but declined, and said she should come downstairs in a few

minutes. I left her to read her cousin's letter. It was not the only one she had received that morning. There was a letter lying with the address downwards on the dressing-table, and Ida had done a thing I did not like, while I stood beside her; she had, as if accidentally, thrown her handkerchief over the letter. Totally ignorant, as she must suppose me to be, of any of the incidents of her life, why should it be her impulse to conceal a letter from me? The action suggested a secretive disposition, peculiarly displeasing to me, and the fact of her having received a letter suggested to me that the difficulties in store for Mr. Dwarris were beginning to marshal themselves; that Mr. Geoffrey Dale was in England, and making advances towards his prey. My position had certain distressing aspects; I felt it almost treacherous to know so much about this poor girl, and to let her go on believing that I knew nothing. I half regretted the knowledge I had gained, strong as was the claim which it gave her on me, and confident as I felt of my own will and ability to befriend her. She was silent, and absent-minded all that day, listless, and not ready to be interested, as she had been before, in us and our subjects of conversation. If, however, my surmise was correct, and the letter she had received was from Mr. Dale, I felt sure she had left it unanswered. I had quickly perceived that there was no mutual liking between Ida and her maid. The two young women, who had gone through such trying scenes together, seemed to have been brought no closer to one another by them than the ordinary relation of employer and employed in its strictest definition; and one of the first subjects on which Ida spoke to me was the arrangement for parting with Bessy West. I thought there was more in her wish to be rid of the quiet young woman, whose perfectly respectful manner never warmed into the slightest evidence of interest, than mere distaste. The clue to Ida's feelings, which her step-mother's narrative had put into my hand, guided me to discerning in this the reproach of conscience and its irritation; and at last Ida betrayed something of what she felt. It was at night, and I was about to leave her in her room. We were to begin our journey early on the next morning. She had responded but feebly to the efforts, which my brother and Griffith had made, to amuse her during the evening. I said a few words of good cheer to her about

the new scene she was about to enter on, and the new life that was beginning.

"It is painful to part with the last link between yourself and the past," I added; "but it is better, unless it could be an altogether pleasant one; and West evidently is not that."

"No," she answered impulsively, as tears sprang into her eyes; "but that is no fault of hers. I must be just to her; the fault is all mine. She keeps before me the only painful recollections of my dear, lost home; she reminds me of my own faults. Oh, Lady Olive, I don't want to forget them; I can't explain what they were; I have repented of them—I shall always grieve over them—and now I can never make any atonement—never—never—since the baby is dead."

"It crossed my mind that it might be well that I should let her know that I fully understood her meaning; that I should endeavour to gain her full confidence then and there; that so I might lend Mr. Dwarris effectual assistance, and damage Mr. Dale's game—whatever it might be—materially. But I checked the impulse as soon as it arose. Such a proceeding would be too much of a coup de main—would hardly be justified, on my part, in the absence of Mr. Dwarris's concurrence, and might frighten Ida, oppressing her with a sense of being suspected and managed.

"I passed over what she had said with some soothing words, and asked her if she was quite sure that she felt equal to the journey, adding:

"Remember, if you do not, there is no reason why we should not stay here a few days more."

"Oh no; pray don't let us do that," she answered; "the sooner it is over the better."

"Griffith, my brother, and I had naturally discussed Ida a good deal among ourselves. Barr thought her very pretty, and was delighted with her ignorance of all things English. Griffith, with the obtuseness of a man of his disposition when profoundly in love, did not see much that was interesting about Ida. He considered her 'rather nice looking,' and felt sure she would be a pleasant companion for Audrey. I laughed at his vague impressions and faint praise.

"You know," I said, "you cannot manage to get up any admiration for Ida, because she is not in the least like Madeleine."

"Indeed I do admire and like Ida," he answered, with the slow sweet smile which always welcomed any reference to Madeleine; "and as to her not being like Madeleine, you cannot suppose I expected she would be. You and I both know that there is no one in the least like Madeleine."

"We left Plymouth on the following morning, and, equally to my surprise and gratification, Barr came with us. 'He had had enough of the coast,' he said, 'and there were one or two things in London he wanted to see about.' It was a pleasant journey; the two young men were in high spirits, and Ida, though she looked ill and nervous, could not fail to be interested in her first sight of England—the land her father had taught her to love, to which he had looked forward with so much hope and expectation.

"On the following morning Griffith took Bessy West to Euston station, and saw her off by the Irish Mail; then returned to our hotel to breakfast. We were to leave town for Wrottesley at eleven, and as Griffith came in, Barr was lamenting the impossibility of doing any sight-seeing in the interval. He had been describing to Ida the feats of that kind which he had made Miss Kindersley and myself perform in the spring.

"You say town is empty," said Griffith, "but you will pick up somebody."

"Well, yes, I suppose I should," said Barr, hesitatingly; "but, do you know, Olive," turning to me, "I've been thinking I can settle the one or two things that have to be attended to just as well by letter; and if it's no trouble to you, I will run down with you to Wrottesley. Can you put me up just now at the Court?"

"We reached Wrottesley safely; and Ida Pemberton was received with the utmost kindness by her uncle and Audrey, who were at the station. Barr and I went direct to Despard Court, after a few words with Mr. Dwarris. Audrey had only time to whisper to me that she thought Ida 'lovely,' and that she had done as I suggested about a maid. 'Mr. Durant was at the Dingle House when I got your letter,' said Audrey, 'and I sent a message by him to Mrs. Kellett. Of course she knew the very person to suit; and sent her up to me in an hour.'"

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